DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 164 671 UD 018 524

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TITLE Black Women's Sources at Howard University.
PUB DATE Oct 78
NOTE 8p.; Paper to be presented at the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (Los Angeles, California, October, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black History; *Blacks; *Black Studies; *Females; *Library Collections; *Resource Materials; *University Libraries
IDENTIFIERS Howard University DC

ABSTRACT

In this paper, seven selected collections from the Manuscript Division of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center of Howard University are examined in terms of the resources they provide on black women. Collections are listed and described in terms of size, period, types of material, photographs, and official documents. The purpose of the paper is to familiarize researchers with outstanding black women and with the information available about them. (WI)

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# "Black Women's Sources at Howard University

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Paper to be presented at the Association
for the Study of Afro-American Life and History

Los Angeles, California
October 1978

UDC 18924

The Manuscript Division of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center was organized in 1973. The holdings of the Division were consolidated and an acquisitions programs, global in scope was begun in 1974 to develop and meet the needs of the scholarly community. The Division presently has the trained personnel to assist researchers in their research on the "Black Experience."

During the past five years the collection usage has been surveyed to ascertain what collections and subjects were being examined by researchers. The majority of the processed collections were being under researched. The usage appeared to coincide with the present vogue of perusing primary resources on black women, however the same collections and names were researched repeatedly. The survey indicated that of the twenty-one names most frequently researched the following six names were used consistently. These names were Anna J. Cooper, Zora Neale Hurston, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, Charlotte Forten Grimke, Angelina Grimke, and Jessie Fauset. The Division's Research Associate, who assists the researchers took the task of identifying the collections and individual manuscript materials concerning the black woman. The lists, made available upon request, are part of the Division's effort to publicize its holdings.

The purpose of this presentation is also to familiarize those persons who are doing reserach on black women, of the existing collection lists and acquaint them with the names of other outstanding black women whose collections are also available for research. The collections that are to be presented in this paper are available for research or upon request. These collections have been examined and finding aids have been developed for them.

The Jeanette Carter Collection, small in comparison to the other collections to be discussed, is far from being insignificant. The collection contains information that discloses the activities of a few colored women during the 1920's, 30's and 1940's in the Washington, D.C. area. Miss Carter, as inferred from her interests and activities, was a politically minded woman who organized the National Political Study Club in 1923. Examination of the club's constitution, documented from a written interview of Miss Carter and Mr. William A. Ferris, shows that Miss Carter was an active follower of women's suffrage. There are pieces of correspondence to members of Congress, speeches and a written interview that document her participation in political activities.

Another black woman's collection, that of Crystal Bird Fauset was considered under researched. Mrs. Fauset was a member of the Intercultural Committee of the United Nations Council of Philadelphia. Her association with the committee is documented through the pages of photographs and clippings in the scrapbooks that comprise

the collection. The scrapbooks contain information on the Youth Council on the Atomic Crisis, the International Assembly of Women and thePanel of Americans. The significant fact is that this black woman was involved in international programs for promoting better human relations with India and Africa during the 1950's. This collection although rich in documentation on her career activities contains virtually no personal or biographical materials. Many of her accomplishments are documented, however through some brief biographical research, it was discovered that Mrs. Fauset was the first black woman elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. A letter from Gov. George H. Earle of Pennsylvania cites her as a recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal. Her accomplishments are numerous.

The third collection examined was that of Charlotte Moton Hubbard. This collection differs from the others surveyed in that Mrs. Hubbard's career was diversified. Her ultimate career accomplishment was to serve as the highest permanent ranking civil servant, having been appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. News releases, numerous pieces of correspondence and telegrams bear congratulatory messages to Mrs. Charlotte Moton Hubbard, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. The political tones of the Johnson Administration's foreign policy are recorded through Mrs. Hubbard's reports, press releases and speeches. Other noteworthy aspects of this collection are the notebooks,

programs and clippings of the Hampton Institute Creative Dance Group with which Mrs. Hubbard was involved during the 1930's and 1940's. The field of communication, radio and television is another segment of her career. Tape recorded interviews document Mrs. Hubbard's programs that were aired on WLIB " Washington By-Line."

The Division also has in its holdings, the Mabel Keaton Stauper Collection that documents the role that black people played in the Integration of the nursing profession. Minutes and resolutions clearly describe the dissolution of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses and the absorption of its members into the American Nurses Association. Correspondence and copies of congressional legislation record the fight for the integration of black nurses into the military. Reports and official press releases from the military disclose the effectiveness of the integration of the nurses corps. There are photographs also noting the arrival of black nurses on Army posts and on boats into the European Theatre of Operations during World War II.

The Mary Church Terrell Collection is not considered an under researched collection, however it was chosen to alert the public of new additions that were received within the last year. The additions to the collection are biographical materials, clippings, programs in memorial, biographical information on Robert H. Terrell, her husband and correspondence from Phyllis Terrell Langston, her daughter. A particularly interesting series of materials

received were the programs, intitations and broadsides on which Mary Church Terrell's name appeared. Organizational materials such as newsletters, programs, press releases, agenda, etc. for the National Association of Colored Women, the Coordinating Committee for the Enforcement of the D.C. Anti-Discrimination Laws and the Mary Church Terrell Fund to End Segregation were included. The photographs and certificates that accompanied the collection are also viable research items.

The last two collections to be described are unprocessed but have had the preliminary inventories completed and are available upon request. The Ida Smith Taylor Papers is conprised of Mrs. Taylor's personal papers, reports, memos, programs and the records of the Gordon Convalescent Home. Mrs. Taylor's manuscript materials record an active political career with the Virginia White Speel Republican Women's Club, the Le Droit Park Civic Association, the National Republican Party and various other clubs and organizations. The records of the Gordon Convalescent Home for which Mrs. Taylor was the founder and director, contain patient fills, correspondence and financial papers. The significance of this institution and the role it played in Washington, D.C. history can be found in its records. The collection is a good primary source for studying the home care of the aging.

The Lillian Rogers Parks Collection is still an open collection. Additions are continuing to arrive. Lillian Rogers Parks is the

author of My Thirty Years Backstairs at the White House. Her collection consists of her writings, congratulatory correspondence from persons who had served on the White House staff along with her, personal friends and acquaintances. The many scrapbooks that Mrs. Parks constructed contain articles, newspaper clippings, photographs, etc. of events happening at the White House and happenings of each presidential administration and events that have occurred in the Washington, D.C. Area.

The presenting of this brief annotation of selected women's collections from the Manuscript Division of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center has been to create interest in black women's collections that are not well know and under researched. The Manuscript Division is rich in materials that document the participation of black women in many facets of the American Society.

The staff of the Division is available to assist you with your inqueries and provide you with the primary resource materials that are available. The finding aids that are developed for each collection are designed with the researcher in mind. These are developed for your convenience.